

# DEMOCRATIC GERMAN REPORT

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## Second Time Lucky?

### Nazi General Ships Troops to Britain at Last

The man in top command of the West German panzer troops now training in Castlemartin, Wales, was once before slated to command German troops entering Britain. The first time, in 1940, he failed.

He is Lieutenant General Heinrich Trettner, now commanding general of the First Corps of the West German Bundeswehr, the formation which sent all troops last year and most troops this year to the Welsh training grounds. He is one of the top six West German army generals.

In the summer of 1940, Trettner was a major; he was the first general staff officer of the 7th Parachute Division, which had just completed its blitzkrieg attacks on Belgium and Holland. On May 24th 1940, Hitler awarded Major Trettner the Knight's Cross for his part in the blitzkrieg.

A few weeks later Heinrich Trettner received new "Top Secret" orders under the code name "Sea Lion". These orders, which were to go into effect on or about September 24th 1940, stated:

**The 7th Parachute Division is to be dropped in the LYMINGE-SELLINGE-HYTHE area, and is assigned the following tasks: to capture the high ground north and north-west of FOLKESTONE; open up crossings over the ROYAL MILITARY CANAL near HYTHE; to defend the troop landings against attacks from the north, especially by blocking the roads from CANTERBURY to FOLKESTONE; to support the capture of DOVER.**

But the RAF kept command of the air, and Major Trettner and his division were never able to carry out these orders. Trettner himself went on to other battles and invasions. As General Staff chief of the 11th Air Corps he played a major part in the conquest of Crete in 1941, and then he went on to fight against the Soviet Union as Commander of the 4th

Parachute Division. In January 1945, just before the end of the war, Hitler awarded him the coveted "Knight's Cross with Oak Leaves" and promoted him to Lieutenant General, the rank he holds again today.

Just over twenty years after he failed to land at Dover, Lieutenant General Trettner read at his Corps Headquarters in Muenster, West Germany, of the successful landing at Pembroke Dock of panzer troops under his command.

There is a parallel to the story of Heinrich Trettner. The man who drafted the plans for "Operation Sea Lion" was a Colonel Adolf Heusinger, Deputy Chief of the Operations Department in Hitler's General Staff.

Today Adolf Heusinger, now a full general, has the top military position in the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation, sitting in Washington, the organisation responsible for allotting British bases to the West German armed forces.

## "AGGRESSION" WARNING

Recent West Berlin attacks on the frontier of the GDR in Berlin have been serious acts of aggression, the Government of the German Democratic Republic charged in a memorandum submitted to all main governments in the world on July 24th.

The memorandum contained many photographs and documents showing that during the past few months the acts of aggression had included the following:

1. Tunnels have been dug from West Berlin into GDR territory.
2. GDR frontier security installations, all situated on GDR territory, have been damaged or destroyed from West Berlin.

3. Murderous attacks have been made from West Berlin on GDR frontier guards carrying out their duties on the territory of the GDR.

"All these attacks have the character of acts of aggression" the memorandum stated. "In the past, attacks on national frontiers of a much less serious character have been the cause of war."

"It is a generally recognised principle of international law that an act of aggression has been committed when another power violates the territory of a state, on whatever

grounds. According to valid international law, the use or the threat of force in inter-state relations is prohibited.

"The Government of the GDR wishes to stress that the Governments of the three western Powers, which at present exercise occupation functions in West Berlin, cannot be exempted from responsibility for the aggressive actions detailed above. The Government of the GDR hopes that the Governments of the three Western Powers recognise the dangerous nature of maintaining the illegal occupation regime in West Berlin."

The memorandum urged the speediest conversion of West Berlin into a demilitarised neutral Free City in order to maintain peace, and called upon the governments and parliaments of all nations to help remove the danger to peace resulting from the present anomalous situation in West Berlin.

Attacks on the GDR detailed in the memorandum included the following:

- a. On May 23rd shots were fired from West Berlin into GDR territory killing one GDR frontier guard and wounding another.

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# NAZI FILES OFFERED

## W. Germany Rejects GDR Bid

The German Democratic Republic has offered to make available to the West German authorities all the nazi files which it holds, in the effort to track down and identify nazi murderers. The offer was made in a letter sent to the West German Minister of Justice Dr Wolfgang Stammberger on July 18th by Josef Streit, Procurator General of the GDR.

The offer followed official West German claims that they could not deal properly with nazi criminals because the GDR was allegedly "holding back secret nazi files in order to make political capital out of them". This West German alibi was used particularly in the case of West German Procurator General Wolfgang Fraenkel, who had to be sacked on July 11th this year, after the GDR had published numerous documents showing that he had been directly implicated in many illegal nazi death sentences.

The GDR letter to the West German Ministry of Justice stated:

"Since 1945 we have regularly placed relevant nazi documents at the disposal of the authorities in West Germany. Two volumes of files dealing with Wolfgang Fraenkel, who has now been dismissed, were, for instance, handed over to the Senior District Court in Kiel, West Germany, August 23rd 1946 (16 years ago, ed.).

"Since 1959 the Procurator General's office of the GDR has transmitted to the judicial authorities of the Federal Republic documents

proving the criminal records of several hundred nazi judges now back in office in the Federal Republic. In addition, documents on many other nazi criminals have been supplied to the West German authorities.

"These documents have dealt with such leading personalities as Dr Hans Globke (Adenauer's State Secretary), Theodor Oberlaender (former West German Refugee Minister), Dr Roemer (Ministerial Director in the Federal Ministry of Justice), Alexander von Doellen (Ministerial Director in the Lower Saxony Ministry of Justice), and Dr Dubro (Judge in the Supreme Restitution Court).

"When such proofs have been sent, this has always been linked with the offer to allow inspection of the original files held here. I would particularly draw your attention to the letters addressed on December 21st 1959 and January 26th 1960 to all Provincial Ministers of Justice in the Federal Republic.

(The GDR letter then gave details of other such offers to allow the inspection of the original documents, including in particular the files dealing with the anti-Semitic record of State Secretary Hans Globke).

"I appeal to the moral responsibility of the Federal Republic, and its responsibility under international law, finally to remove from office all nazi criminals still in office, and to bring them before the courts.

"I therefore repeat former offers to allow the inspection of the original files held here, and express my readiness to receive persons appointed by you who, by reason of their office have suitable qualifications, and who are authorised to make independent decisions in evaluating the documents. I am ready to negotiate with you on other suggestions in this matter."

A West German Government spokesman said on July 25th that no reply would be sent to the GDR offer. The spokesman stated: "It has been established that the letter is a political propaganda move".

Commenting on this decision, "The Times" of London stated: "The Federal Government finds itself caught between a genuine desire to prevent a repetition of the Fraenkel episode and a determination to avoid anything, such as a reply to the East German Prosecutor-General's letter, which would come, in its view, a step nearer contacts with the communist regime."

## 12 Years Jail Then - Two More Years Now

Karl Schabrod, who spent the twelve nazi years in prison and concentration camp, was sent back to prison for two years by a West German court in Dusseldorf on July 23rd. His offence was to have stood as an independent candidate in West German provincial elections in 1961. Before the Communist Party was banned in 1956, Schabrod had represented this party in the Provincial Parliament of North Rhine-Westphalia.

Schabrod had been sent to concentration camp by the nazis soon after they came to power in 1933, and was sentenced to life imprisonment in 1934. Before his liberation in 1945, he spent 6½ years in solitary confinement.

In the same West German trial, Emil Sander was sentenced to fifteen months and Wolfgang Schroeder to nine months. The charges included standing for election illegally and publishing an illegal newspaper.

Emil Sander was also jailed by the nazis. Later he fought in the International Brigades in Spain.

## GDR EXPORTS FACTORY (1)

Burma's only cement mill, situated at Thayetmo on the Irrawaddy, has just been completely rebuilt by nationally-owned firms of the German Democratic Republic. The cement plant, instead of 180 tons daily, can now produce 580 tons of cement a day and thus makes Burma largely independent of foreign imports.

## GDR EXPORTS FACTORY (2)

The Egyptian Minister of Industry Sedki officially opened a large spinning mill built by the GDR on July 15th. The mill, situated at Kena, in southern Egypt, has modern equipment featuring 28,000 bobbins for spinning Egyptian cotton. The machinery was produced by the nationally-owned Textima (textile machinery) firm in Karl Marx Stadt.

## GDR EXPORTS FACTORY (3)

The management of the sugar factory built by the GDR in Indonesia in 1958 presented trade representatives of the GDR with a token sack of sugar from current production as a sign of their satisfaction with the quality of the equipment. The factory now produces 1000 to 1200 tons of sugar daily and is able to increase its capacity considerably.

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b. On June 18th a GDR frontier guard was shot at point-blank range by a West Berlin agent. West German TV cameras were poised in readiness on the West Berlin side of the frontier at the time of the incident.

c. In the night of June 16th members of a gang organised from West Berlin were captured during an attempt to break through the GDR frontier installations. Members of the gang, most of whom had criminal records for crimes of violence, stated that they had been ready to shoot down GDR frontier guards in the course of their frontier provocation.

d. On four dates in May and June 1962, bombs were exploded damaging to various degrees the frontier installations of the GDR in Berlin.

# "LAOS SOLUTION" FOR W. BERLIN

The agreement for the neutralisation of Laos could set a pattern for the neutralisation of West Berlin, Otto Winzer, Deputy Foreign Minister of the German Democratic Republic stated in an interview on July 26th.

"The parallel drawn by British Foreign Minister Lord Home between the Laos situation and the West Berlin situation is not at all bad", Otto Winzer stated.

"The solution by which peace has been made secure in South-East Asia by means of the neutralisation of Laos is based upon agreements some of which could certainly be applied to West Berlin.

"There is, for instance, the agreement that the SEATO pact powers should withdraw from Laos. Applied to West Berlin, this would mean that NATO would have to withdraw from

West Berlin. The misuse of West Berlin as a NATO military base must be ended.

"The agreement on the neutralisation of Laos lays down that all foreign troops must be withdrawn from the country, and that there should be no foreign military bases there; all states signatory to the Laos agreement pledged themselves to respect the neutrality of the country.

"Applied to West Berlin, this would mean that the Western occupation

troops would have to abandon their military bases there, end their occupation regime, and withdraw their occupation troops. The security of a neutral West Berlin Free City could be guaranteed by the presence of neutral police troops, or by contingents from the two European power groups under the flag of the United Nations.

"Such a settlement could easily be reconciled with the proposals repeatedly made by the GDR and the Soviet Union for a peaceful solution of the West Berlin problem. In this sense, one can accept the parallel drawn by Lord Home. All that is needed in addition is that amongst the Western Powers the voice of sense should finally triumph over the aggressive aims which are supported in particular by the Ultras in Bonn."

## OFF-BEAT FOOTNOTE

"A Laos solution for West Berlin is fine, but where the heck are they going to get three princes from?" commented a cynical Berlin journalist on hearing the suggestion.

# CHILDREN'S HOLIDAY CAMP

By Allen Mann

Tears, shouts, children and adults running in all directions, and general confusion — those were my impressions as I arrived with my little boy at the station where he was to leave for children's camp. But by the time the train pulled out of the East Berlin station on its way northwards to the Baltic seashore, all the children had been safely stowed away in the proper railway compartments according to age and with their proper baggage and adult group leaders and their parents were waving goodbye from the station, ready to enjoy three weeks of quiet without the kiddies.

I was a little bit concerned about my son Tommy, for he had just passed the minimum age of 6 and was therefore the youngest boy at camp; since it was his first such trip with a new group, I and especially my wife wondered if he would get homesick, if he would wash himself properly, change his clothes, eat properly and all the rest.

This week I visited him for a day and a half, and was able to check up for myself. But first, I should explain something about children's summer camps in the GDR.

All factories, offices and other places of work in the GDR are required to give the children of their employees an opportunity to go away to camp in the summer. This means, in effect, that all parents who wish to can send their children for three

weeks every year to the seaside, mountains or lakes.

Larger factories or groups of smaller firms in the same branch often own their own summer camps. But to avoid sending the children to the same place every year, they try to trade with other firms for camps in different parts of the country. The GDR's main newspaper, "Neues Deutschland", is always full of such ads, offering a camp for fifty children at the seaside for a similarly-sized camp in the mountains, for example.

The prices for such camps are extremely low; they usually cost 12 marks (about £1) per child for the three weeks, including trainfare and all other expenses. If a family sends more than one child, even this low price is reduced.

In the case of my son's camp, I was told that it really costs about 180 marks per child for the three weeks — 15 times the price charged. The difference is made up partly by the "Cultural Fund" of the firm — administered by the trade union group — and partly by the central Free German Trade Union Federation.

But back to my visit to my son's camp. After walking for three-quarters of an hour through the bleached, sandy little 12,000 population town of Ueckermünde, and out into the farm country on the other side, I finally found the big building housing the camp. Except for the sum-

mer, it is used as an agricultural training school. Now, eight groups of children ranging from 6 to 16 occupied double-decker beds in the building's two storeys, with girls downstairs and boys upstairs, in all 83 children.

When I arrived, the children were pouring down the stairs from their midday nap, all set to go to the beach. I found my wife's worst fears unfounded — every child looked clean, well-dressed and well-nourished; they were just as noisy but much more good-natured than they had been at the station. My own son, too, looked none the worse for wear. He was glad to see me, but seemingly untroubled by homesickness. If he did not show much tan, it was because the late GDR summer had only just begun to turn warm and sunny — in mid-July.

I went with his group of ten little lads of 6 and 7 as they walked in pairs through town to the beach — shepherded carefully by a young woman who worked as a secretary the rest of the year. Like the other eight "group-leaders", she had interrupted her regular work to watch over the children of her fellow-employees at the camp. Although this meant several welcome chances to go bathing at the seashore, it did not of course count as her holidays, and she also received full pay during the three weeks. I can bear witness to the fact that she and the

other group-leaders earned their money. All the little lads in my son's group were cute little fellows, but they were no angels, and they were constantly up to tricks—such as engaging in earnest fisticuffs about who was to play with a toy sailboat, or throwing the heavy end of a toilet paper roll out the second storey window and watching it flutter in the wind.

Most of the group leaders were secretaries or bookkeepers, since this camp is run by several publishing enterprises. They had attended regular fortnightly instruction courses in managing children since April, and so were equipped, if not for everything, at least for the normal every-day problems of watching over a swarm of children.

I noted that the children were on very good first-name terms with the group-leaders — a pleasant departure from the all too common German formality. The only exception was the wife of the camp director, who was addressed more formally, but who nevertheless turned out to be a very sagacious woman in her manner of dealing with youngsters.

The camp director himself, who is sales director of a publishing firm, obviously got along very well with both the children and the adult staff. This meant a constant running

around, early and late, to attend to all kinds of problems, large and small, from disciplinary questions to guaranteeing the camp's butter supply. Yet he always seemed to find time for the children. Often enough, I saw him with his shorts, T-shirt and balding head, racing some of the older lads in an improvised 100 meter sprint or talking and joking with little groups of boys or girls.

The beach was a very nice one — but it was a little too far to go there every day, nor did the still changeable weather make this advisable. On the other days, there was an assortment of activities. On the morning I was there, several younger groups went to the woods to pick blueberries, which they later ate for dessert at lunchtime. In the afternoon, most of the groups went to the athletic field to play various kinds of ball games. They also engaged in a treasure hunt for bags of sweets concealed in a small wood nearby, and had a great deal of fun with a combined ball-and-guessing game I had never seen before. Before the games started, everyone had decided to weed part of a maize field which they walked through on their way. The group leaders had suggested this because it would get rid of the thistles and nestles which

annoyed them all the time, but most of the children actually enjoyed the weeding and worked at it for about an hour, thus helping the local co-operative farm and doing a bit of healthy work as well.

Other activities arranged for the three weeks included a steamboat voyage to the nearby island of Usedom, a short trip with a sailboat, a garden party with dancing and festivities, and a field, track and soccer competition with the children from a big state-owned farm who were on holiday at a camp not far away. On rainy days the children were kept busy with handicrafts like clay-modelling and scissors and paper constructions.

Three weeks at camp is not a very long time. For the remainder of their summer holidays, the children can take part in games, excursions and other activities run by the schools and the Young Pioneer organisation (something like the Scouts) in all towns and cities, or they can take trips with their parents. But the summer camps in the GDR mean that nearly every child in the Republic has a chance to get away from city streets and traffic and breathe country air in new surroundings every year. This is new in Germany, and unequalled in very many countries of the world.

## THE SHOP ON THE CORNER

By Madeleine Karrer

When I need fruit and vegetables, I go to a shop on the corner of my street. It is small and neat and is run by the state trading organisation — the HO (Handelsorganisation). Two years ago it was a worse-than-average shop, but things have changed a great deal since then.

A few weeks ago I joined quite a long queue standing outside the shop. We were not waiting for the shop to open, or for some short supply article, but for a much more pleasant reason. Regular customers wanted to congratulate the staff of the shop on the award of the title "Team of Socialist Labour". I knew part of the story of how this honour had come to be awarded, but not all of it, so I invited the sales staff around to my flat so that they could tell me something of their work over a bottle of wine.

In June 1960, when residential estates were mushrooming in the Berlin borough of Treptow and there just were not enough shops and per-

sonnel to satisfy demands, the married couple in charge of this HO greengrocery were due to take their annual holiday. That meant closing the store for three whole weeks. The local Socialist Unity Party group, to which I belong, simply boggled at the pending overcrowding of the remaining stores. So five or six women, members of the group or of the local branch of the Democratic Women's League (DFD), volunteered to fill in the gap as part-time workers on the condition that the HO supply a trained manager, because they had never done this job before. They undertook to work without pay as a contribution towards the National Construction Movement.

The volunteer staff really put their hearts into the task — so much so that as a result the customers asked them to stay on after the holiday period. By that time they had themselves become attached to the shop, to their clientele and to the work as a whole. Sales had gone up even

in that brief space of time because they were truly interested in the job they were doing, unlike their predecessors.

Since everyone is guaranteed a job under socialism, and sales help was very short anyway, the couple who had run the shop before had done their job with little enthusiasm or initiative and no worry at all about being sacked. One of the main means of education in such cases is socialist emulation, but more of that later on. The volunteer staff finally negotiated with the HO and were engaged as paid part-time saleswomen, while the previously-employed couple were assigned a new shop in another part of the city near to where they lived. So everyone was happy.

One of the women, Margarete Brehm, took on the job of deputy director. When the HO manager — a trained businesswoman — had an accident she took on all her duties. By November they had all settled

down in their jobs and Mrs Brehm was officially installed as manager. Regular customers increased rapidly, for the word spread that here was a well-run friendly shop. The women took part in inter-shop competitions and always fulfilled the obligations they had undertaken. They formed themselves into a team and called themselves the "Women of Today Brigade". After a while they felt themselves up to competing for the title of honour "Team of Socialist Labour".

"That's all very well for factories and workshops, but what do you have to do in your jobs to acquire this distinction?" I asked. The reply covered many different points, but the following emerged as most important. They always try to serve their customers in a friendly manner, drawing their attention to stocks on hand and suggesting alternatives for non-available goods. Great attention is paid to cleanliness, neatness, proper stock-handling to prevent damaging or deterioration, and avoidance of too high inventories. One of the facets of this socialist emulation is called "socialist aid" and this can be given in the distributive field too. "We go and help in other stores if someone falls ill or is on holiday," Mrs Hillinger, one of the team members, told me. "But we have to do it without working overtime and that is chiefly an organisational question — apart from the feeling of responsibility towards society."

In addition, socialist emulation spells boosting sales and increased turnover calls for friendly salesmanship, swift service and cordial relations with the shoppers. "And they're quite easy to establish. You see, we're glad to lend a helping hand to working women. They can give us written orders in the morning and collect their shopping bags when they come home," Mrs Dietrich, another of the group, explained. In addition, the local Women's Federation group helped the team to get in touch with a market gardener in the neighbourhood with whom the HO signed a contract for fresh vegetable deliveries. "We usually fetch them ourselves because they're so much tastier then," Margarete Brehm remarked.

"And so that is how we came to be awarded the coveted title on May 1st — which meant that we marched with the other 'Activists' at the head of the May Day demonstration in Berlin," concluded Traudel Waschek.

"Did you get any assistance from the HO and from the people living around here?" I asked. That opened up a new flood of stories like the one about the housewives who spent

three hours finding out where Mrs Brehm lived because she had left one of the office windows open and they were afraid of burglary. Or the case of the cleaning woman who wasn't to be had for love or money, because earnings are so much better in industry.

This problem was solved provisionally by a mop-and-brush movement amongst party and DFD members who came for one or two hours at a time to scrub the floors and help clean the vegetables. After the building of the wall on the GDR-West Berlin frontier last August it finally became possible to find a cleaning-woman — one of those who had worked in West Berlin previously to take advantage of the "currency exchange racket". And the HO district manager has helped too by seeing to it that the shop always receives its supplies correctly and punctually.

"And what about qualification?" I enquired. The women have tackled and mastered this problem in an interesting and novel way. Each of them occupies the managerial post for six months at a time on a rotational basis. "That means that we all share in the responsibility and learn to do this job. That also means that everyone can stand in for the manager should she become ill. Bonuses, by the way, are divided up in accordance with the hours of work put in at all jobs in the shop, and not just the hours spent behind the counter as is customary elsewhere. That gives an incentive to do all the tasks that have to be done in the shop."

Traudel Waschek is the current manager. She was born in 1927 in Chemnitz (now Karl-Marx-Stadt). She attended elementary school for eight years and was then apprenticed as a sales accountant. After passing her exam in 1946 she worked on a farm for a year because the food situation was so bad at home. Then

she worked as a secretary and later joined the People's Police. She stayed there until 1959 when the birth of her son tied her to the house. In 1960 she joined the group in the shop on the corner.

Marianne Hillinger, a mother of three children, is the only trained saleswoman in the team. "I took up employment because I just had to break out of my four walls. I wanted to meet other people again, too," she told me. "I began playing with the idea while working on our co-op shop committee and was able to put it into effect when I deputised for a colleague during her vacations. I only stayed at home because of the children and when my eldest boy started to go to work I shared a shift with a friend of mine and we looked after our children in turns. And, of course, a bit more money for extras is always welcome."

Mrs Dietrich didn't want to start working at all. In the first place she wasn't feeling too well and in the second she was plagued by high-degree shyness. But Mrs Waschek begged her to substitute for another colleague during her holidays. "Only for two hours a day, really!" she insisted. The colleague moved away after her holidays, however, but Mrs Dietrich decided to stay on, for much to her surprise she was feeling much better and even her shyness had disappeared.

Margarete Brehm was born in 1912. "After attending elementary school I wanted to go on and study languages, but Father said 'No' because I was a girl and 'would probably just get married anyway'. However, I went to night school and took up stenography and typing, and then, in 1939, married author Erich Brehm. From 1945 on I worked, without drawing a salary, at the Neukoelln Town Hall in West Berlin. The main incentive was the ration card! Two years later I started learning Russian and commenced teaching it in 1948."

Mrs Brehm taught until 1953 when poor health forced her to give up this profession. She worked at home doing free-lance translations. She is one of the DFD party members who volunteered to substitute for the married couple in 1960 and she has remained faithful to her customers ever since.

That was the story the team told me about their shop on the corner, and that is how I came to be standing in the queue of shoppers waiting to congratulate their saleswomen and to present them with small gifts, flowers and chocolates as a token of appreciation for the good work they had done and would be doing in the future.

### Statistics in English

Statistics on industry, health, culture and many other fields are quoted in the STATISTICAL POCKET BOOK of the German Democratic Republic for 1961, which is now available in English. The 200-page pocket book, published by VEB Deutscher Zentralverlag, Berlin, also includes two coloured maps of the GDR and numerous graphs. The pocket book, which costs 9/-sterling, may be ordered from:

Collet's Ltd.  
45 Museum St.  
London W.C. 1, England

# Some Reflections on Brecht (II)

By Yvonne Kapp

It was in order to make the audience aware of these dichotomies, these divided selves and situations, these conflicts and opposed possibilities, that he devised his special language of the theatre; not that of speech alone (though Brecht's style is a fascinating study in itself), but of theatrical communication in all its aspects. His aim was to make the audience capable of choice and judgment. The theatre was to stimulate, not to hypnotize. He spoke of the theatre of the past as a narcotics traffic, and meant his own theatre to drive home the fact that human beings are not as he put it: "unchangeable, unadaptable and handed over helpless to fate."

After describing the trance-like state in which audiences sit through a play he writes:

"To transform a general passive acceptance to an equivalent state of suspicious enquiry, you need to develop the detached eye with which the great Galileo observed a swinging chandelier. He was amazed by this pendulum motion, as though he had not expected it and could not understand it happening, and this enabled him to discover the laws which governed it. This is the attitude, disconcerting but fruitful, that the theatre must arouse by its representations of human social life. It must amaze the public and it can do so only by a technique of making the familiar seem strange. This allows the theatre to use the new social scientific method known as dialectical materialism. In order to discover society's laws of motion, this method treats social situations as processes and traces all their inconsistencies. It regards nothing as existing except in so far as it changes, in other words, is in disharmony, contradiction with itself. That applies to human feelings, too, and opinions and attitudes in which at any given time forms of social life find expression."

The spectator was never to forget that he was in the theatre, and that the theatre was part of the real world. So the actors step forward and address him, telling him whom they represent and what they are going to do. Placards and screens announce the forthcoming action, or comment on it, or explain what is going on behind the backs, as it were, of the stage characters — and introduce songs. No one in a Brecht play

pretends that it is perfectly natural to burst into song. Music is used as a deliberate break of tension, as a heightening of the spoken word, as an interlude, but almost always something presented for its own sake, to be recognized, of the stage, stagey. There are few naturalistic sets and the stage, like the Chinese theatre, is brilliantly lighted, whether the scene is indoors or out, at night or in sunlight, so that you can see what is going on — or why go to the theatre?

The actors were never to identify themselves completely with the characters they played. It is the very opposite school of thought to that of the Stanislavsky Moscow Art Theatre. During rehearsals, Brecht made the actors say: "He said," "She said," before their lines, so that they remained aware that they were quoting other people's words. He demolished the "star" mystique by making players interchange roles and in this way realize more objectively the distinctive essence of a character.

In his many words of advice to actors Brecht drew their attention to what he called "the theatre of the street," where witnesses to an accident or an injustice play out the parts as they relate the events, without ever identifying themselves with the careless driver or harsh rent-collector they are mimicking. And it is this "eye-witness" element that he brings on to the stage, as in the savage sabre-dance performed by one of Mother Courage's sons. You are aware as you watch that this boy is imitating some frantic sword-play or street dance that he has seen. He is no dancer, he is no swordsman: this is how he thinks it should go, and the double effect has a strangely disturbing quality, as different from the smooth "song-and-dance" routine of the average "musical plays" as can well be imagined.

It is no wonder that to put on a Brecht play — or any other — at his theatre takes from three to six months of rehearsal; and, as he explained, what is finally presented is the outcome of endless trial, exploration, rejection and re-thinking.

In fact, during his lifetime, being a very consistent as well as a modest personality, his plays were never unalterable. At the very last rehearsal

he would accept suggestions made by any member of the cast, or, for that matter, by the technicians. He did them no favors: their ideas were acceptable if they strengthened and clarified the aim of the production; never to make things easier for himself or anyone else. Thus there cannot really be said to exist "definite texts" — only "last versions."

Brecht had the utmost respect for all forms of craft and not least for stagecraft. The real apparatus of stage technique is always manifest in his theatre and, when you enter it, only that part of the stage where the action will take place is hidden: there are no great, huge curtains that will rise but, on a visible cord, halfway up the proscenium arch, a straight linen hanging, with Picasso's dove, which will part when the play begins. "The process of showing," he said, "must itself be shown," and though the most brilliant use is made of raked and revolving stages, of costumes and décors designed by highly fertile artists, and every device known to the "theatre of illusion" — and used with a good deal more taste — Brecht's spirit, and the spirit which animates all these devices, is the spirit of reality.

Of course, his purpose is didactic — but never at the expense of entertainment, which he regarded as the highest good, mocking people who try to impress others by telling them not how much fun they have got out of their work, but how much effort they have put into it. Although he wrote of the "experimental theatre" and "the theatre of learning," what, in fact, the elegance and beauty of his productions, his wit, his intellectual power, the intrinsic interest of his characters and situations excite are admiration, wonder, laughter, anger, passion: all the emotions which some idiots think he wanted to chase out of the theatre. What he chased out was the "self-evident" that lulls criticism and complacency.

While the plays are episodic, they are made up of episodes in a chain of dramatic development. Only in one play — *Fears and Miseries of the Third Reich* — are there separate "sketches" of the type we associate with revue. But almost every play has its great setpiece.

For example, in *Galileo*, there is the Robbing of the Pope, from the naked shell of the man who pleads

on the side of reason, tolerance and humanity, to the Pontiff in full regalia who pleads for no more than that Galileo shall not be tortured but only be shown the instruments of torture ("he understands instruments").

There is the scene in *Puntilla* where the chauffeur and the landowner's daughter act out a scene of married life in which their class differences are comically and also painfully demonstrated in this sharp little play-within-a-play.

In *Mother Courage* there is the famous scene called "The Stone Speaks," when the dumb girl sounds the drum to rouse the people in the sleeping town who will be massacred. She is shot dead, but not before the town has been awakened to its danger. There is no single modern playwright who has given us scenes more telling, more moving than these. Nor is there richer comedy with a sharper edge than the episode in Arturo Ui where the broken-down Shakespearian actor teaches Ui (Hitler) to become an orator.

Brecht knew better than most that, to understand the events of his time, a poet must acquire a knowledge of causes and not merely observe effects.

"Let us assume," he wrote, "that we want to portray great passions or events that influence the fates of peoples. Today such a passion might be the drive for power. Suppose that a poet 'felt' his drive and wanted to show someone striving for power? How could he absorb into his own experience the extremely complicated mechanism within which the struggle for power takes place?... He will scarcely find out enough by going about and keeping his eyes open, though that is slightly better than rolling his eyes in a fine frenzy. The setting up of a newspaper like the *Völkische Beobachter* or an enterprise like Standard Oil is rather a complicated business and these things are not simply absorbed through the pores."

So Brecht took immense pains to acquire the knowledge he needed as a poet and interpreter of his own age. Reading *Capital* in 1926 he wrote to a friend: "I'm up to the neck in it now; I've got to know all this properly..." And, though he did absorb a great deal "through the pores" — which is a way of saying that he listened and observed very acutely — he made the effort, stage by stage, to understand the underlying social forces at work in his own time, for lack of which effort so much of the talent of even our most progressive younger poets and playwrights today seem pallid and amorphous in comparison with Brecht.

He lived through an age of war and violence, of suffering, hunger and unemployment, of social protest and upheaval, of corruption, fascism, then war again and its aftermath of cold war; but he also recognized it as an age of change and of unlimited possibilities. And in that lies his greatness; for the years of despair fostered many artists in many countries, but very few whose creative imagination was robust enough to strike its deepest roots in reality, and yet bear the fruit of hope.

While the founders of Marxism-Leninism gave their liveliest recognition to genius in every field — and by no means for its socialist expression — it has been left here largely to bourgeois critics to acclaim Brecht, in works representing considerable thought and some scholarship, as a dramatist of genius, and not merely as the greatest German dramatist, but the greatest of our time. So far, Communists have given little serious study to this towering and spectacular figure in the ranks of leftwing authors, while much attention and lavish tributes are paid to rather seedy writers who refrain from propping up reaction and display a friendly, if not very close, acquaintance with scientific socialism. Brecht represents one of the examples of artistic merit of which one can say to Communists, with pride: you want the best, we have it.

Brecht's whole aim was directed to creating a theatre "fit for the scientific age," as he said; a theatre that, illuminated by poetic insight, displayed man as alterable in alterable situations; a theatre that denied people the illusionary, passive and resigned attitudes that purge them,

not only by pity and terror, but of all will to act. As Marx had said of the philosophers, so Brecht believed that the dramatists of the past had interpreted the world in various ways, but that the point was to change it.

When Brecht's admirers try to rescue him from the taint of Communism and a politically committed viewpoint, it is not just poor or silly criticism, it is a basic misunderstanding of the whole meaning of his work — and also, incidentally, of the choice he himself made in his life. These critics think that they can strip him of his politics and rehabilitate him, fit for the bourgeois world, as a great dramatist with a deeply flawed personality. They believe this possible because, unlike many other politically committed writers and artists, Brecht's politics were not of the political platform. They were inherent in every fibre of his creative work.

A final world: all translations of Brecht are bad. But then, most of us were brought up believing that Tolstoy, Turgenev, Dostoyevsky and Chekhov all wrote in the style of Constance Garnett, and yet we think we know these authors pretty well, so plainly this is not an insurmountable difficulty. But the important thing is that not all performances of badly translated Brecht plays are bad. Firstly, because they were not written to be read but to be acted; secondly, because if ever an inspired producer of Brecht should appear in this country he would restore what is inevitably lost in the printed work; and, lastly, because the plays themselves are of such excellence that something of their quality always comes through.

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# BERLIN NOTEBOOK

By John Peet

Several readers in Berlin have drawn my attention to an apparent error in "Berlin Notebook" on July 6th. An American visitor to East Berlin was quoted as remarking on the lack of fresh vegetables in the shops here, and my readers point out that when this Notebook appeared in print the greengrocers' shops were bulging with fresh young carrots, peas, cauliflowers, lettuces and tomatoes, to mention only a few of the vegetables on sale.

We stand corrected: what had happened was that the Notebook in question was set up in print some weeks earlier, when vegetables were still sorely lacking, and that I failed to make the necessary emendation. But the criticism made by the American visitor was quite valid; the GDR has not yet solved the problem of providing a regular all-the-year-round supply of sufficient fresh vegetables and fruit.

## Lean Meat

But though the vegetable and fruit situation is pretty good in the GDR at the moment, the meat situation is rather lean. Last year, all crops in the Republic fell far below average, owing to the horrid weather; as a result fodder was very short in the winter and early spring, and a lot of stock had to be slaughtered since it could not be properly fed.

This is now making itself felt, and meat is in short supply for the first time for many years. In order to prevent people with time on their hands from hurrying from shop to shop, everybody has been asked to register with one butcher, who will then be able to allot available supplies fairly. Nobody is pleased that such a measure has had to be taken, but it is hoped to go back to free sale of meat to all comers as soon as stocks are back to normal.

## On the Beam

I have just noted a fine case of "mote and beamism" in one of the leading West Berlin newspapers, the "Tagesspiegel". In a leading article on July 21st this paper dealt at some length with the case of Wolfgang Fraenkel, the West German top prosecutor, recently forced to retire because of his very shady nazi past, and stated:

"The whole case is typical of the dangerous laxity with which the brown stains on white waistcoats are disregarded, even when there is

a question of selecting a candidate for high office. A very minimum of vigilance would have revealed Fraenkel's incriminating past. And the worried reports of (West) German ambassadors in friendly countries give further proof of the fact, so often ignored here, that other peoples do not forget our past so quickly..."

All very correct and proper. What makes this leading article so particularly jolly is the fact that the "Tagesspiegel" is edited by a man with a great big brown nazi stain on his white waistcoat.

His name is Karl-Heinrich Silex, and during the Hitler period he edited the nazi Berlin daily "Deutsche Allgemeine Zeitung" for ten years. Here are a couple of examples of his writings then:

"Adolf Hitler is supported by the confidence, the love and the respect of the Germans. He has often been able to thank God for his goodness, and has often received God's gifts. We greet him as the man whose path is Germany's path." (April 20th 1939).

"The time has come for increased effort and new sacrifices. The need is to become still harder. The incomparable deeds of our soldiers under the leadership of Adolf Hitler have created the certainty that we shall carry this gigantic struggle to a victorious conclusion." (January 1st 1942)

"We remember our fallen heroes and we know that the march of death must continue, that many will have to honour with their ultimate sacrifice the oath of allegiance to the Fuehrer". (January 1st 1943)

If any of our more far-flung readers were confused by my opening reference to "mote and beamism", here is the reference: "Why beholdest thou the mote that is in thy brother's eye, but considerest not the beam that is thine own eye?" which comes from the Gospel of St. Matthew in the New Testament.

## Pensions for Whom?

Who should get pensions in Germany today? People who were disabled fighting against the nazis, or people who fought for the nazis? In West Germany, of course, they have quite a simple answer: people who volunteered to fight for Hitler. On July 18th, 26th anniversary of Franco's rising against the Spanish

Republic, the West German Government announced officially that it would pay regular pensions to members of the infamous "Blue Division" of Spanish fascist volunteers which fought for Hitler on the eastern front.

The other side of the picture was provided a few days earlier: a West German citizen named Robert Geitz applied for a pension because he had been completely crippled in the nazi concentration camp of Buchenwald. He had been sent there because he had refused to serve in Hitler's Wehrmacht. The Nuremberg finance office, which had to decide on the case, ruled that he was not entitled to the pension because he was himself responsible for his injuries because he had refused to serve Hitler.

## Cat Story

We have never gone in for animal stories in the Berlin Notebook, so let me take up a few lines with a cat story, just for a change. For a few weeks now, Radio Berlin International, the voice of the German Democratic Republic, has been broadcasting on the medium wave band, and the radio people have had a lot of letters from people in Britain who have heard the station for the first time. Most striking of the letters went something like this: "When I was sitting in my car last night, waiting for my wife, I had the car radio on. My cat, who likes car rides, suddenly jumped, and brushed against the tuning knob. Immediately in came, loud and clear, your programme in English."

If you do not happen to have a talented cat in the family, you can tune in the half hour programme of news and views from Radio Berlin International every evening on 269 metres at 10 pm British Summer Time (2100 hours GMT). And every Tuesday evening, barring sickness or holidays, you can hear the writer of these lines commenting on the latest developments in the two German states.

\* \* \*

If the next issue of GERMAN REPORT seems to be taking a long time to reach you, do not immediately assume that we have gone bankrupt, or that your local post office is interfering with your mail (though I should say that readers in various countries do have post office trouble). The reason will simply be that we have shut up shop to go on a short holiday.